

50th Anniversary

NATO

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DE L'ATLANTIQUE

NORD

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As we mark the 50th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we celebrate the Alliance's success in defending freedom and maintaining peace over the past five decades. Americans have learned at great cost in this century that if we want to be secure at home, we must stand up for our interests, our ideals, and our friends around the world. Nowhere has our engagement been more vital than in Europe, where we have fought and won two world wars and the Cold War in this century. And no institution embodies this commitment more than NATO.

But this anniversary is not only about recognizing past accomplishments. It also presents an opportunity to chart the course of our partnership for the future and to set forth a vision of NATO for the coming decades: a larger, more flexible Alliance capable of meeting a broad range of challenges to our common interests.

NATO's purpose remains unchanged. Its mission is to defend the security, prosperity, and democratic values of its members. But the environment in which the Alliance must carry out this mission has changed. Over the last five years we have been building a new NATO that is better equipped to deal with different challenges — with new missions, new members, and new partners across Europe, including Russia and Ukraine. Yesterday's NATO guarded our borders against military aggression. Tomorrow's Alliance must continue to safeguard our shared security while contending with new threats that recognize no borders — the spread of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic violence, and regional conflict.

In April 1999, the leaders of the European nations and Canada will gather with us in Washington to welcome three new democracies — Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic — as they join us in our mission to guide the Alliance into the 21st century. NATO's doors will remain



Declaring that NATO will be a positive influence for peace throughout the world, U.S. President Harry Truman addresses the Washington Summit prior to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949. The foreign ministers of the 12 signatory nations are seated in the front row (left to right): Ernest L. Bevin, United Kingdom; Halvard Lange, Norway; Joseph Bech, Luxembourg; Bjarni Benediktsson, Iceland; Gustav Rasmussen, Denmark; Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgium; Dean Acheson, United States; Lester B. Pearson, Canada; Robert Schuman, France; Count Carlo Sforza, Italy; Dirk U. Stikker, Netherlands; and José Caeiro de Mata, Portugal.

open to all those willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities of membership, and we will continue to work to strengthen our partnerships with nonmembers.

As we look ahead to the future, our goal is to build an even stronger transatlantic partnership with a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace. I am convinced that succeeding generations of Europeans and Americans will enjoy peace and security because of NATO's ongoing efforts to fulfill the mission outlined 50 years ago: defending freedom, preserving peace and stability, and fostering a climate in which prosperity can flourish.

WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



U.S. President Bill Clinton congratulates Javier Solana of Spain on his appointment as NATO secretary general at Moncloa Palace in Madrid on December 3, 1995. The two leaders represent the cooperation between Europe and North America that has given the Alliance its enduring strength.

The Transatlantic Link

The ties between Europe and North America are deep and durable, having survived wars of independence, occasional disagreements, and the separation imposed by the Atlantic Ocean. Over the past five centuries, these

ties have evolved into a strong bond based on a shared history as well as on common values. From the Magna Carta to the Declaration of Independence to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Europeans and Americans

have espoused a vision of individual rights, rule of law, economic freedom, and democracy. These similarities in culture, heritage, and ideals are what have linked us together for hundreds of years.

Most Americans can

trace their ancestry back to Europe. Between 1820 and 1995 more than 36 million Europeans emigrated to the United States. The 1990 census found that of some 250 million Americans, 58 million were of German ancestry; 39 million, Irish; 33 mil-



Immigrants aboard the liner S.S. *Patricia* cross the Atlantic Ocean to the United States in December 1906. Between 1890 and 1921 almost 19 million people arrived in the United States; approximately 90 percent of those immigrants came from European nations. The cross-fertilization of customs, ideas, and values between North America and Europe continues to benefit the transatlantic community today.

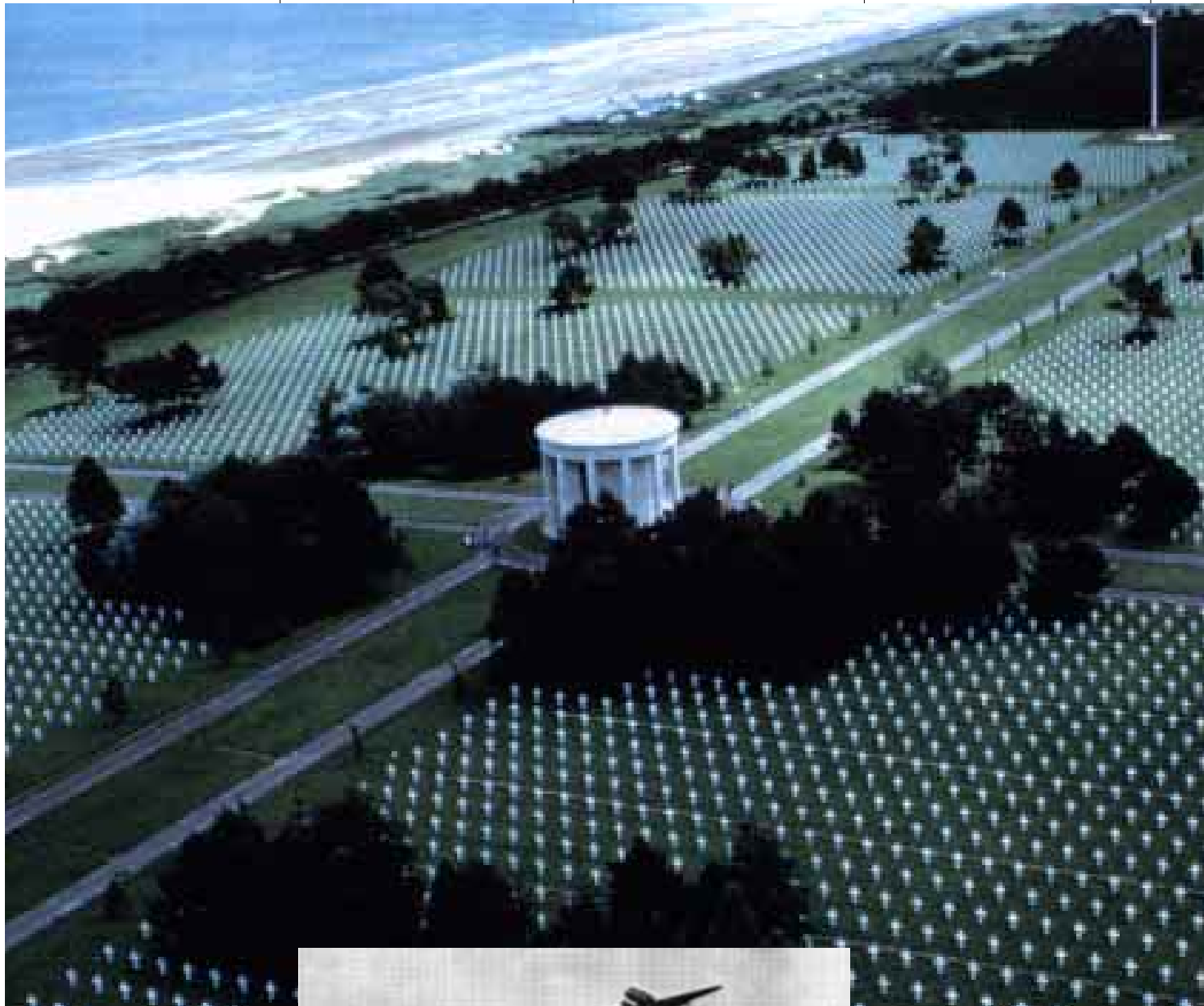
lion, English; 15 million, Italian; 10 million, French; 9 million, Polish; 6 million, Dutch; 5 million, Swedish; 4 million, Norwegian; and 3 million, Russian. Today, more than 80 percent of

Americans are of European ancestry. Recent years have seen a renewed interest in this mix of cultures, with Americans becoming more aware of and celebrating their ethnic heritage. This, in

turn, has reinforced the strong political ties between the two continents.

Twice in this century, this transatlantic bond has been powerful enough to have the United States send

its young men and women across the ocean to fight for freedom in Europe. Together with their European allies, Americans of many ancestries stormed the beaches of Normandy



Above: The American military cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France, is the burial place for more than 9,000 U.S. soldiers who were killed in the Normandy invasion of World War II. During the last 80 years, the United States has proven its commitment to defending a democratic Europe through two world wars and the Cold War, and by its dedication to mutual defense through NATO.



Left: Berliners stand amid ruins at the edge of Tempelhof Airport watching a C-47 plane come in for a landing to deliver food during the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49. The airlift symbolized the determination of several NATO members to halt aggressive actions in post-war Central Europe.

on D-Day, helped revive the economies of Europe with the post-war Marshall Plan, flew relief missions during the Berlin Airlift, and approved the entry of the United States into the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Dealing with crises together brought America closer than ever to Europe, and support for NATO has remained strong to this day. ■



American servicemen wave from a ship's railing at the port of Houston, Texas, as they begin their voyage to serve with NATO forces in France in 1954. Such joint activities strengthen the ability of NATO's members to pursue common defensive military objectives.



U.S. troops and tanks cross the newly-constructed Sava River pontoon bridge into Bosnia in 1995. More than 30 nations, working under Alliance command in Bosnia, have proven the value of NATO's cooperative military planning, training, and field operations.



Polish-Americans celebrate their heritage with a Polish Day parade in New York City in 1997. Family ties and sentiment, common history and common interests have produced enduring bonds between the peoples of North America and Europe.

Embracing Old Adversaries

Twelve nations — Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States — founded NATO in April 1949. They later invit-

Two world wars had made clear that the strength, stability, and freedom of Europe and of North America could not be separated.

For 40 years, NATO concentrated primarily, and

The Berlin Wall, symbol of the division of Europe, abruptly fell.

NATO was quick to respond, reaching out to those who had previously opposed it. At its summit meeting in London in July 1990, the Alliance extended

based on cooperation and mutual understanding. The following November, Alliance members and their new partners signed a Joint Declaration in Paris stating that they no longer regarded each other as adversaries and would



ed Greece, Turkey, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Spain to join. The United States, instead of retreating back across the Atlantic Ocean, joined Canada in staying closely involved with the security of their allies in Europe.

with admirable success, on collective defense, holding firm against outside threats. In 1989, however, events began to change rapidly the political and international structure of Europe.

the hand of friendship to all the former members of the Warsaw Pact and invited their governments — and any others willing to join — to establish regular contact and consultation with NATO and to work toward a new relationship

Turkish and Greek officers shake hands following a NATO maneuver in Turkey, circa 1953. NATO offers its members a forum where they can discuss shared concerns and find common ground.

refrain henceforth from the threat or use of force against each other. Future crises would be resolved through consultation and open discussion.

NATO immediately set in motion a radical reduction and restructuring of its forces, cutting military personnel by 24 percent and land-based nuclear stockpiles by more than 80 percent. It created the Partnership for Peace (PfP), which brought nearly 30 nonmember countries together to meet with the NATO allies and deal jointly with matters of common concern. In 1997, after a lengthy process of negotiation and preparation, NATO invited the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to become full-fledged members of the Alliance, leaving the door open for other countries that may wish to join and can meet the requirements.

That same year, NATO took another step toward fully embracing former adversaries by creating two special bodies, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) and the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), as channels for communication, consultation, and cooperation with these countries. These new entities offer unique forums for discussing such issues as crisis response, non-proliferation, defense conversion, and environmental protection with Russia and Ukraine.

Ten short years have seen NATO evolve from a tightly knit self-defense organization into an expanding group of allies and partners eager to work with each other, consult together, and embrace former adversaries. ■



The German flag is raised among the flags of other NATO countries at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Rocquencourt, France, marking Germany's entrance into NATO in 1955. Early in the history of the Alliance, leaders decided that its democratic ideals could best be fostered by embracing forward-looking policies, rather than encouraging historical animosities.

Czech soldiers under NATO command in Bosnia in 1997. Less than a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, soldiers of many nationalities are working side by side with their counterparts in NATO to deal with regional crises.

Left to right: U.S. President Bill Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac applaud Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act (the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security) in Paris on May 27, 1997. NATO Secretary General Javier Solana is seated at far right. The Act provided for an intense, mutually beneficial relationship between one-time rivals in Russia and the Alliance. Such embracing of former adversaries expands NATO's ability to pursue peace and cooperation throughout Europe.



Cooperation & Consensus

NATO has remained strong because it has always operated by consensus. How to protect the security of all its members has been, from the beginning, a collective matter to be decided jointly.

All decisions are the expression of the will of member governments arrived at by common consent and unanimous agree-

Another benefit has become abundantly evident through the years: the everyday activities of meeting, talking, and searching for agreement allow little room for suspicion and misunderstanding to take root. NATO members openly discuss and debate among themselves their

Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). Every member nation, whether large or small, has an equal voice and equal power to voice its concerns. This diversity

Below: Heads of government of the NATO member states convene for the Madrid Summit in July 1997. Regular meetings at the highest levels ensure that all views are heard and that key decisions have the solid support of every Alliance nation.



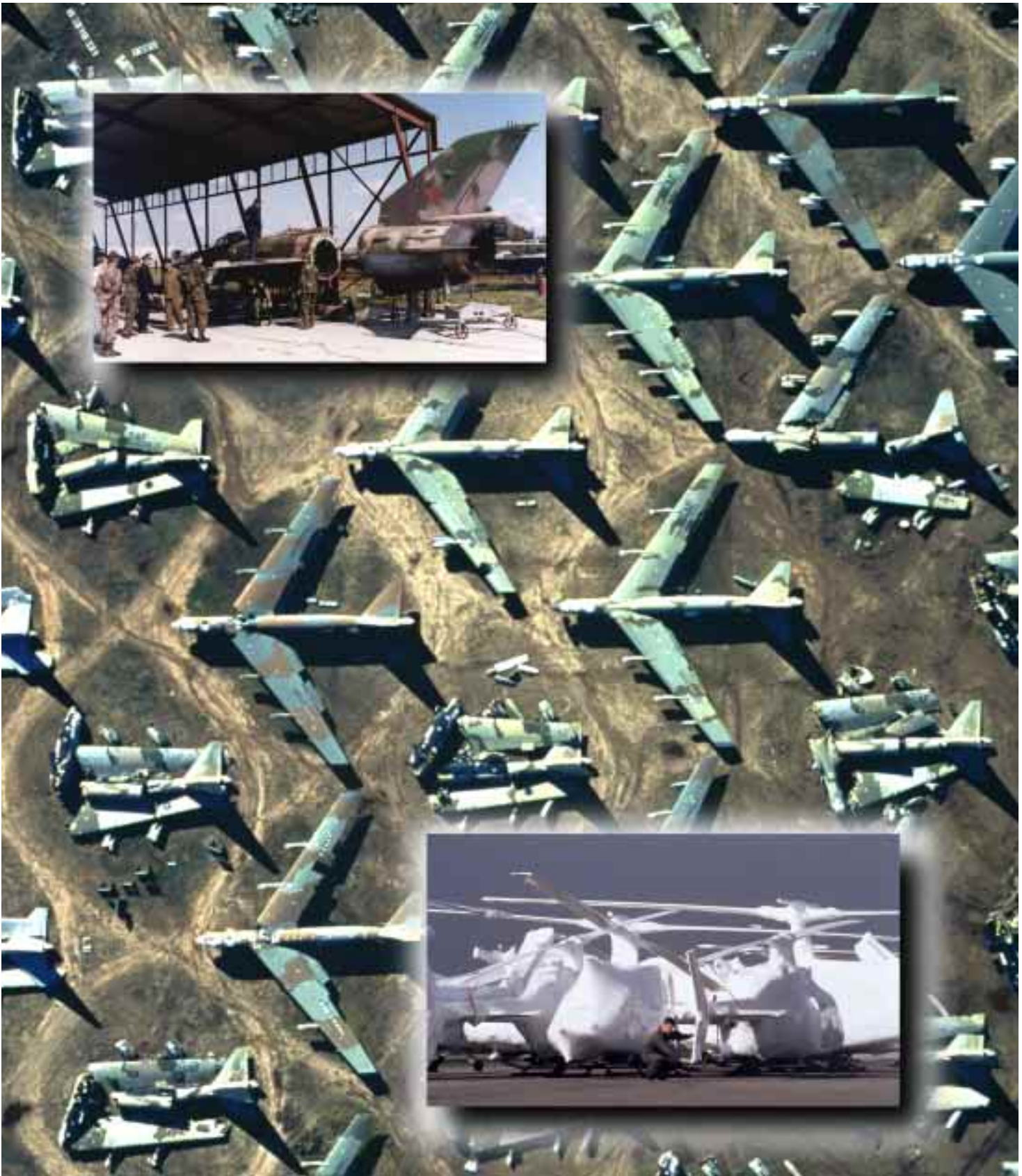
ment. The reasons for this are both legal and practical. Legally, each member is a sovereign nation and cannot be told what to do by any other. Practically, collective agreements based on the concurrence of the parties are the most likely to succeed.

hopes, policies, and plans to guarantee security and to protect the values of all member states. Surprise, NATO has found, is detrimental.

Reaching consensus is not always easy. Consider the great diversity of language, culture, and historical background of the nations that make up NATO — and now of its partners in such organizations as the

Right: American B-52 bomber aircraft are destroyed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona in accordance with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which entered into force in December 1994. NATO is strongly committed to ensuring the security of its members with the lowest possible number of weapons, and supports nuclear arms control efforts such as START. It welcomes the early implementation of the 1997 START II agreement.





Top: The fuselage of a MiG-21 in Chuguyeu, Ukraine, is severed under the terms of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. Since the treaty was signed in 1990, by all NATO and

Warsaw Pact members, more than 50,000 weapons have been destroyed. The CFE Treaty was a landmark in creating lower levels of conventional weapons, providing for openness in military activities, and diminishing the possibility of a surprise attack by any country.

Above: U.S. military helicopters are readied for return to the United States from Mannheim, Germany, in 1993. The U.S. commitment to the security of Europe

remains unassailable, but the number of American forces needed in Europe has diminished as the threat has declined and European nations have expanded their own defensive capabilities.



is often a distinct advantage. So many different perspectives and points of view make any final decision — whether it involves peace support, the

scrapping of unneeded military hardware, or environmental concerns — that much more sound and effective. Then, when a crisis arises, the best way to proceed can generally be arrived at quickly, because matters surrounding the

problem have already been under discussion for some time. And the decision, whatever it may be, is made in an atmosphere of openness, confidence, and trust. ■

A U.S. Marine officer meets with the local Turkish military leadership during NATO exercise "Dynamic Mix 98" in Iskenderum, Turkey, in October 1998. The purpose of the operation was to improve command and control procedures, including transfer of authority, deployment of reaction forces, interoperability, and mobility of multinational forces. The United States and Turkey participated in "Dynamic Mix 98" along with Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Joint military planning is the bedrock of NATO's commitment to collective defense.

Flexibility

One of the keys to NATO's unprecedented success is the flexibility that keeps it relevant and responsive as circumstances change. With the end of the Cold War, the nature of potential threats to peace and stability in Europe was significantly altered. Localized hostilities based on ethnic or religious differences, and the widespread human and economic upheavals that

can result, are now far more likely in the future than a direct military attack on one or more allied countries. Also of major concern is the risk posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

However, along with new kinds of threats, this dramatic change has brought with

it one great benefit: all the countries of Europe — working through NATO and the organizations with which it cooperates, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — can now act together to promote stability and security. They can turn their attention from confrontation to cooperation, from prepar-

ing to defend themselves to preserving peace.

Recognizing this, NATO's foreign ministers, at their meeting in June 1992 in Oslo, stated their readiness to support peacekeeping activities on a case-by-case basis. They reaffirmed this commitment in December 1992 and in June 1993.

A request came from the United Nations in 1995, asking NATO to provide the



Soldiers from U.S. and Russian patrols greet each other in Bosnia in March 1997. Taking on new partners and new missions

when political circumstances require it is an illustration of the Alliance's resilience.



military muscle for a peace-keeping plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO, along with its partners and other nations, responded by sending a peacekeeping force of thousands of men and women from more than 30 countries to stop the fighting in this troubled region. This force incorpo-

rated non-NATO soldiers into the unified command structure alongside NATO's own troops and opened a new dimension of cooperation between NATO and the UN. The fact that Russia

contributed a sizeable force to the effort showed the value of earlier attempts on both sides to find ways of working together.

The secure environment provided by NATO and its partners in the Bosnian peacekeeping force made it possible for the OSCE to organize and carry out

democratic elections. The United Nations, the European Union, and other organizations found they had a secure foundation to begin their economic and political reconstruction efforts. The result is that

A contingent of 60 soldiers from France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Luxembourg leave Strasbourg, France, on June 23, 1998, for a six-month tour of peacekeeping duty in Bosnia, with transport provided by the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The ability of each NATO nation to contribute from its best resources gives NATO extraordinary versatility.

Below: Bosnian workers plant a tree during a reconstruction program in the Sarajevo suburb of Jezero on February 24, 1998. During the war almost all trees in Sarajevo were cut down and used for heating and cooking due to shortages of electricity and gas during the siege. The NATO-led stabilization force, or SFOR, has taken on new tasks to create a secure environment that will aid civil reconstruction in Bosnia.



A soccer ball slips through a makeshift net during a children's game in the village of Simin Han, near Tuzla, Bosnia, July 21, 1998. Two Bosnian soccer clubs made their post-war international debut that week, playing one match at home and another abroad. Moving beyond the separation of warring factions, SFOR provides the stability that helps normal life return to this devastated country.

now, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, many roads and bridges have been repaired, trains are running again, airports have reopened, schools and hospitals have been rebuilt, a new telecommunications system is in place, and thousands of refugees and displaced persons have returned home.

NATO today is particularly effective at forming partnerships and creating solutions that are tailor-made for each unique challenge. In so doing, it has found the key to longevity and viability for any

Munitions experts prepare to arm missiles on American F-16 fighter planes at Aviano Air Force Base in Italy for the first mission of "Operation Determined Falcon" over Kosovo, Serbia, in June 1998. The threat of NATO action in the turbulent province brought the two sides in the conflict to the negotiating table.



institution: the ability to adapt. Cooperation with other concerned organizations is also a hallmark of this process. ■



U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen, with a mannequin wearing a military chemical weapons suit at left, briefs reporters at the Pentagon about a 1997 chemical weapons report that said more than 25 nations had developed or may be developing nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and the means to deliver them. Dealing with the proliferation of these weapons is one of the new challenges that NATO must face.

Promotion of Democracy

The glue that holds NATO together is the shared ideal of freedom and democracy, which now extends throughout Europe. It reflects the desire deep within its people to participate in deciding how their lives will be lived. NATO promotes the adoption and spread of democratic standards and helps fledgling democracies institute them.

One way it does this is through the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Partnership with NATO has encouraged a number of countries to speed up democratic reforms, including the principle of civilian, democratic control over their military forces. These NATO partners have also been encouraged to join in the process of cooperation, consultation, and consensus-building that characterize relations among members of the Alliance itself. By working to build good relations with their neighbors and to increase the transparency of their defense planning and military budgets, they move closer to achieving NATO's rigorous standards for membership. Partner countries that are already democracies share their expertise through joint planning, training, and military exercises.

Transparency is especially important in

reducing tensions. If each country is willing to make specific information about the size, structure, and deployment of its military forces available to other nations, then all countries can be more confident that their neighbors are observing agreements they all have made. The

control of military forces increases the chances that reason and caution will be brought to bear on all matters involving the use of force. Military leaders can express their opinions, but final decisions are made, as they should be in a democracy, by elected officials.

Eastern and Central as well as Western Europe. It also organizes seminars and conferences on democratic issues throughout PfP countries and offers visits to NATO headquarters for military, government, and media representatives from these nations to learn about



objective is to reduce uncertainty, which can lead to misunderstanding and then to conflict. Civilian

NATO is also using other means to promote democracy. It has established fellowships to encourage the study of democratic institutions, with fellows chosen from the countries of

Lawmakers from the Solidarity caucus vote to confirm the Solidarity-led government in Poland's parliament on November 11, 1997. NATO's promise — a partnership of nations dedicated to peace through the ideals of freedom, security, and stability — has provided inspiration to numerous emerging democracies.

NATO policies and civil-military relations. Alliance representatives work closely with aspiring PfP members to modify institutions that do not yet meet democratic norms. ■



Left: Czech President Vaclav Havel talks to the media after casting his vote in Prague on the first day of general elections in the Czech Republic on May 31, 1996. With Poland and Hungary, the Czech Republic was invited to become a NATO member in July 1997. The return to democratic practices and the resolution of conflicts with neighboring states are important criteria for NATO membership.

Below left: The votes are counted in one polling station after the first post-war city parliament elections in Mostar, Bosnia, on June 30, 1996. NATO troops provided the security needed for Bosnian citizens to vote with confidence.

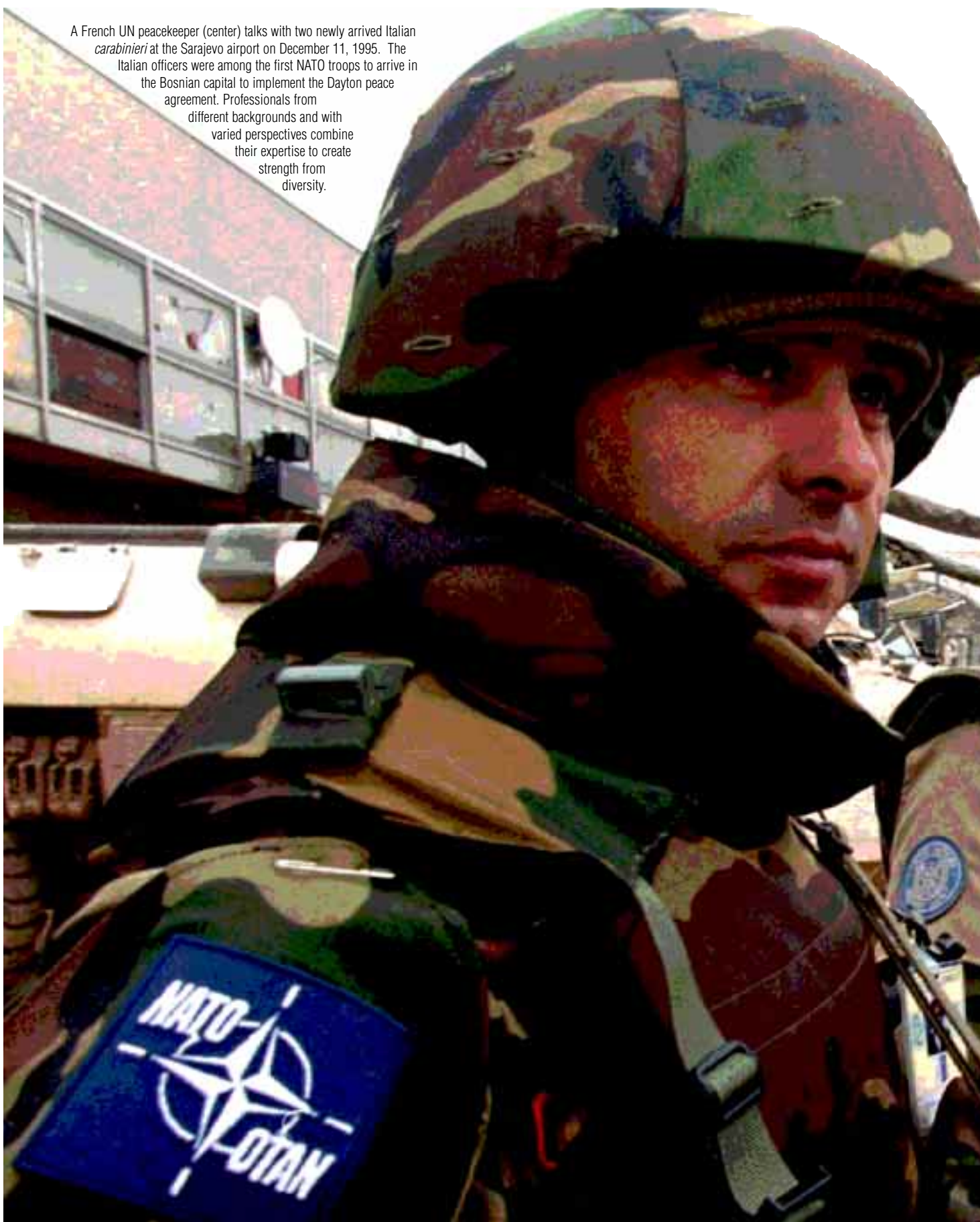
Below: U.S. President Bill Clinton addresses a crowd of some 20,000 Polish citizens at Warsaw's Castle Square on July 10, 1997. President Clinton visited Poland immediately after he attended the Madrid Summit at which the members of NATO decided to invite Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the Alliance.



Below: Opposition SDK party leader Mikulas Dzurinda hugs his wife Eva after the announcement that a late exit poll in Slovakia's general elections put the SDK ahead of the ruling HZDS party on September 26, 1998. The election was a landmark in the development of democratic systems in Slovakia, which NATO had vigorously promoted.



A French UN peacekeeper (center) talks with two newly arrived Italian *carabinieri* at the Sarajevo airport on December 11, 1995. The Italian officers were among the first NATO troops to arrive in the Bosnian capital to implement the Dayton peace agreement. Professionals from different backgrounds and with varied perspectives combine their expertise to create strength from diversity.



Partnership

Throughout its history, NATO has been a political as well as a military alliance. Its consensus-building consultations — covering a range of issues well beyond defense — have contributed to a depth of understanding

among its members rarely equaled, certainly never surpassed. Since the Cold War ended, NATO has been building on this experience by creating interlocking relationships with other institutions, such

as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU), with the idea that all of them can work together to promote stability and well-being, while at

the same time reducing tensions and heading off crises before they develop. Not one of these organizations has sufficient scope or resources to solve every major international problem by itself. But taken together they make up a



formidable “tool kit” that can be used to select the best approach to resolving conflicts.

Of particular importance is the OSCE, a group of 55 European nations bound by the visionary moral and political principles of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, linking peace and security to democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. The size and diversity of the institution makes it an ideal framework for promoting freedom and democratic values. NATO is working together with the United Nations, the OSCE, the EU, the Council of Europe, and the Western European Union to guarantee freedom of movement, ensure the inviolability of borders, prevent conflict, promote peaceful settlement of disputes, and, when necessary, participate in peace support operations. A recent example of this cooperation occurred in Kosovo, where the OSCE and NATO joined forces to save the lives of thousands of refugees by ensuring their safe return to their homes before the onslaught of winter, while the European Union is providing financial support for the peaceful settlement.

Building on the success of earlier cooperative endeavors — in particular, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council — NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations created the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) at their meeting in Portugal in May 1997. This Council, made up of 44 nations, gives its members a



place to discuss all things that concern them — military, political, economic, or environmental issues — and to try to reach the kind of consensus that NATO has

bating international terrorism. Other discussions deal with such issues as disaster relief, environmental degradation, computer networking, and science and tech-



found to be so effective through the years. The EAPC works to expand political and military cooperation among member nations to diminish threats, promote stability, and preserve peace.

Some discussions within these interlocking organizations involve military matters, such as arms control, regional security, and com-

nology. Together NATO and PfP members are not only guaranteeing security, they are also searching for ways to solve other problems confronting them. Several hundred scientists from PfP countries, for example, now participate in NATO's scientific and environmental programs.

In the field of economics, considerable priority has been given to helping countries convert to peaceful activities the industrial capacity they formerly used to produce military hardware. These conversions go a long way toward improv-

ing standards of living, reducing unemployment, and freeing up resources for the benefit of all. ■

At the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg in May 1998, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (second from left) and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow (left) meet with (from right) NATO Secretary General Javier Solana, Assistant Secretary General for Defense Planning and Policy Anthony Cragg, and Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs Donald J. McConnell. NATO condemned India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, saying the explosions have profound implications for the Asian subcontinent's security.

Left: A Ukrainian officer from the Ministry of Emergencies (center) confers with his colleagues from Iceland and Denmark during the PfP exercise “Cooperative Safeguard 97.” Teams of rescue workers practiced disaster response procedures in the field during the exercise held in Iceland in July 1997. Ukraine's special relationship with NATO was recognized in the 1997 NATO-Ukraine Charter.





Flags of participating nations are presented during opening ceremonies of the PFP peacekeeping exercise "Cooperative Osprey 98" at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, on June 3, 1998. NATO members Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States took part in the exercise, along with Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Through its Partnership for Peace program, NATO members now have strong cooperative political and military ties with 25 nations, stretching from Central Asia to the northern reaches of Sweden.



The guided missile cruiser U.S.S. *Belknap* leads the battle group assembled for the NATO exercise "Display Determination 91," which also included the British

light aircraft carrier H.M.S. *Invincible* and the Spanish aircraft carrier *Principe de Asturias*.

New Beginnings

NATO and its partners across the length and breadth of Europe have the opportunity to bring to fruition George C. Marshall's vision of a Europe whole, secure, prosperous, and free. For too many decades only a dream, that vision is suddenly within reach. The energies of all countries can finally be concentrated on the same goals — peace and prosperity — rather than diffused by the need to guard against each other.

Since NATO's foundation, member nations have been unified in their mutual defense and have held that a military attack on any one of their members was an attack on all. Today, these nations are continuing to safeguard their collective defense while also working to develop unified responses to other threats such as ethnic conflict. These nations have learned through experience that unity engenders the strength and will needed to solve problems. The realization of the astronauts who looked back from space at the fragile blue ball of earth has been seared into our consciousness: we are all in this together.

"Greater interdependence means that we are more vulnerable to developments that occur in different parts of the world,"

says Javier Solana, NATO's secretary general. "We cannot stand aloof or indifferent and pretend that our economies, our societies — and our security — can somehow be totally insulated from what happens elsewhere. Certainly not in a world where, as we see every day in the newspapers, the impact of events on one side of the world can be felt right around the globe. We need to step forward and manage the challenges, not retreat before them or wait for them to confront us." ■



Young people feed birds from the Charles Bridge in Prague. They will be able to plan their futures with confidence because of the safety and security NATO brings to their lives. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright noted, NATO guarantees everyone's freedom by "expanding the area ... where wars simply do not happen."



Above left: Polish Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek (left) with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana (second from left), Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs, and Czech Foreign Minister Jaroslav Sedivy (applauding at right) congratulate each other after signing the protocols of accession to join the Alliance during a ceremony at NATO headquarters in Brussels on December 16, 1997.

Above right: In a White House ceremony on May 21, 1998, U.S. President Bill Clinton signs instruments of ratification for NATO enlargement following advice and consent by the U.S. Senate. Standing in the front row (left to right) are: Czech Ambassador Alexandr Vondra, Polish Ambassador Jerzy Kozminski, Hungarian Ambassador Gyorgy Banlaki, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski, and U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

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<http://nato50.gov>